

CHAPTER 2:

FOUNDATIONS

PURPOSE

This chapter:

- Introduces the basic ideas behind the ASAP system;
- Explains how to read the Guide; and
- Provides a checklist of what you will need before you begin using ASAP.

WHAT IS ASAP?

The Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) is a system through which organizations receiving Federal dollars can draw funds pre-authorized by Federal agencies for payment through the U.S. Treasury.

ASAP is an all-electronic payment and information system developed jointly by the Financial Management Service (FMS) of the US Treasury and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

ASAP USER ORGANIZATIONS

In ASAP,

- ▶ **Federal Agencies** provide funds;
- ▶ **Payment Requestors** draw the Federal funds; and
- ▶ **Recipient Organizations** use the Federal funds.
- ▶ **Regional Financial Centers (RFCs)** of the Financial Management Service provide customer support to ASAP users.

A "Payment Requestor" in ASAP is an **organization authorized to draw Federal funds** for deposit into bank accounts it specifies.

In some instances a Recipient Organization has the authority to draw its own Federal funds, in which case that organization is **both** a Payment Requestor and a Recipient Organization in ASAP.

In other instances only a **separate** Payment Requestor, such as a State Treasurer or Controller, has the authority to draw down Federal funds for use by one or more Recipient Organizations.

ASAP distinguishes between the roles of "Recipient Organization" and "Payment Requestor" because each role allows a different set of system capabilities.

HOW ASAP WORKS

- ▶ Federal Agencies, Payment Requestors, and Recipient Organizations **enroll** on a one time basis to use ASAP.
- ▶ Federal Agencies establish and maintain **accounts** in ASAP to control the flow of funds to Recipient Organizations.
- ▶ Payment Requestors initiate **payment requests** via ASAP to meet the cash needs of Recipient Organizations.
- ▶ Approved requests are paid either the **same day** via the Federal Reserve's **FEDWIRE** system or **next day** via the Federal Reserve's **Automated Clearing House (ACH)** system.

ACCOUNTS

All funds in the ASAP system reside in **Accounts**. These accounts are defined and created by each Federal Agency for its own programs in ASAP. Below are some important points to remember about ASAP Accounts:

- ▶ The structure of each ASAP Account **always** includes the Federal Agency providing the funds, the Recipient Organization using the funds, and an **Account ID** chosen by the Federal Agency to track the funds. Each ASAP Account is unique.
- ▶ The ASAP Account is the **lowest level** at which the ASAP system maintains transaction activity. It can represent a program, a group of programs, or some unit within a program.
- ▶ For each ASAP Account, there is only **one** Payment Requestor that can draw funds from that account.
- ▶ Federal Agencies fund their ASAP accounts by entering spending **authorizations**.
- ▶ The amount of money in each ASAP Account available for drawdown by a Payment Requestor is called the **available balance**.
- ▶ ASAP Accounts are **not bank accounts**, and available balances are not funds in your bank account. When a Federal Agency enters an authorization to an ASAP Account, no money leaves the US Treasury until 1) a payment request is made and approved against that ASAP Account, and 2) the payment settles at the Payment Requestor's financial institution.

IDENTIFIERS

To summarize what we have seen so far, ASAP transactions revolve around **Federal Agencies**, **Payment Requestors**, **Recipient Organizations**, and **ASAP Accounts**. In order to use ASAP, you must become familiar with the identifiers for each.

- ▶ Each Federal Agency is identified by a unique **Agency Location Code** consisting of 8 digits.
- ▶ In cases where there are multiple regional offices of the same Federal Agency in ASAP, a 2-digit **Region** code is used in addition to the Agency Location Code to distinguish each regional office.
- ▶ Each Payment Requestor is identified by a unique **Requestor ID** consisting of 7 digits.
- ▶ Each Recipient Organization is identified by a unique **Recipient ID** consisting of 7 digits.

NOTE: In cases where a Recipient Organization is also a Payment Requestor, that same organization will have **both** a Recipient ID and a separate Requestor ID.

- ▶ The **Account ID** is part of each ASAP Account. It is from one to 20 characters long, consisting of letters and/or numbers. It is assigned by the Federal Agency according to its own internal account structure.

Putting the pieces together, you can specify an **ASAP Account** from which to draw funds by indicating a valid combination of:

Agency Location Code/Region + Recipient ID + Account ID.

NOTE: A "valid combination" is one created by the Federal Agency when establishing the ASAP Account in the system. The Federal Agency also specifies the Requestor ID of the Payment Requestor allowed to draw funds from that account.

The following table summarizes the identifiers used in ASAP:

| BUSINESS-LEVEL ENTITY | ASAP SYSTEM IDENTIFIER |
|------------------------------|---|
| Federal Agency | Agency Location Code/Region |
| Payment Requestor | Requestor ID |
| Recipient Organization | Recipient ID |
| ASAP Account | Valid combination of Agency Location Code/Region <i>plus</i> Recipient ID <i>plus</i> Account ID |

HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

Each of the following chapters in this Guide begins with an overview of the major concepts of that chapter, followed by one or more sections. Each section has one or more **Examples** in which a sequence of ASAP screens shows you how to perform a particular function step by step. Please see the following page for a sample Example.

In all Examples, **shaded characters** indicate data the user types on a screen. **Bold** characters indicate information that the system produces in response to a user action.

All Examples follow an ACTION - RESULT structure. The Action performed by the user appears in the top screen on each page, and the ensuing system Result appears directly below it. The next page of an Example then shows the subsequent user Action and system Result, continuing in this fashion until the Example is complete.

NOTE that all Agency Location Codes, Requestor IDs, Recipient IDs and Account IDs in this Guide are strictly for illustration. When you practicing in the test region, you will use the test data provided to you. After you cut over to production, you will use "live" production data.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- ▶ The current calendar date always appears in the upper right corner of each ASAP screen.
- ▶ The **Current Cycle Date** is the date in the upper left corner of each ASAP screen. It indicates the current date in the ASAP application. In production, it will ALWAYS equal the current calendar date. In the test region, this date may not equal the calendar date. This is not a problem. However, you need to be aware of what the current cycle date is in the test region.
- ▶ When an ASAP screen first appears, you may press the Enter key and have the system indicate with red question marks which fields are required to be entered on that screen.
- ▶ Use the TAB key to move the cursor to the beginning of each field in which you wish to type information. Do not use the arrow keys: they can move the cursor into areas in which you may not type. Also, do not use the Enter key as a carriage return.
- ▶ Refer to the Troubleshooting Guidelines in the Appendices first to resolve simple error messages.

*** SAMPLE EXAMPLE ***

STEP 1 - ACTION:

Fill in the prompt screen as shown below and press Enter. Note - The Account ID field is left blank.

| | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| SP115A | AUTOMATED STANDARD APPLICATION FOR PAYMENTS | 01/08/97 |
| SP115AO | ACCOUNT BALANCE INQUIRY PROMPT SCREEN | HH:MM:SS |
| 01/08/1997 T | | |
| REQUESTOR ID: 0101234 | | SHORT NAME: |
| ENTER: | | |
| AGENCY LOCATION CODE/REGION: 11000001 / | | SHORT NAME: |
| RECIPIENT ID: 0101111 | | SHORT NAME: |
| ACCOUNT ID: | | |
| F4=MENU F5=MAIN | | |

STEP 1 - RESULT:

The following screen appears with all account balances for criteria specified on the prompt screen. Note: The F8=PGDN indicates that there are additional account balances in this example.

| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| SP120A | AUTOMATED STANDARD APPLICATION FOR PAYMENTS | | 01/08/97 |
| SP120AO | ACCOUNT BALANCE INQUIRY SCREEN | | HH:MM:SS |
| 01/08/1997 T | | | |
| AGENCY LOCATION CODE/REGION: 11000001 / | | SHORT NAME:US MONEY1 | |
| RECIPIENT ID: 0101111 | | SHORT NAME:GRAY U | |
| ACCOUNT ID | CUMULATIVE AUTHORIZATIONS | CUMULATIVE DRAWS/RP/BE | CURRENT AVAILABLE BALANCE |
| TOTALS: | | | |
| F3=PRMT F4=MENU F5=MAIN | | F8=PGDN F9=ALC F10=RO | |

GETTING STARTED

Armed with the above knowledge, you can proceed to learn the specifics of using the ASAP system. The three main functions that you as a Payment Requestor can perform are:

- ▶ Drawing funds,
- ▶ Making adjustments, and
- ▶ Inquiring on information in ASAP.

Before you begin, please go through the following **checklist** and verify that you have everything listed. If you are missing any item, or have any questions, please call your servicing RFC at the number in your ASAP Handbook.

- Personal computer, modem, printer, and operating system as specified in the ASAP Handbook.
- Passport communication software for Windows loaded on the PC you will be using to access ASAP.
- User ID and password for yourself.
- ASAP ID and Organization Access Code (OAC) for your organization for access to the test region of the ASAP system.
- Test data for one or more "dummy" Federal Agencies, Recipient Organizations and ASAP Accounts.

GOOD LUCK!